



# Music of the Polish Renaissance

Rutgers Collegium Musicum  
Andrew Kirkman, Conductor



Much of the music on this disc is linked to the great Cathedral of Wawel, which, along with the neighboring Royal Castle, towers over the medieval city of Kraków, Poland. Wawel (pictured on the cover of this CD) was and remains a place of great national significance to the Polish nation, and the Cathedral has functioned both as the site of Royal coronations and as a national necropolis. More recently it became more widely famous as the episcopal see of Karol Wojtyła—the future Pope John Paul II—while Archbishop of Kraków. Not surprisingly, then, musical provision at the Cathedral, which generally followed Western European trends during this period, was consistently of the very highest level, with some of the greatest music in Polish musical history being composed specifically to echo around its walls.

There can be no finer music to have graced this sacred place than that of the author of the opening tracks on this disc, Bartłomiej Pękiel (d. ?Krakow, c.1670). Pękiel took up his post as director of music at Wawel following long service as organist and choirmaster of the King of Poland in Warsaw. For Warsaw he composed many pieces in a dramatic style for voices and instruments, but on assuming his post at Wawel he turned to the more ‘renaissance’ style represented on this disc. A clear hint of the nature of that idiom can be seen already in the full title that came to be applied to the Mass with which we begin: the *Missa pulcherrima ad instar Praenestini* (‘most beautiful Mass in the style of Palestrina’). The

title seems apposite: Palestrina himself would surely have been deeply proud of the elegance and ravishing beauty of this sublime work. Given its sobriquet it comes as no surprise to discover that a number of plainchants are entwined in its polyphonic web, but it is noteworthy that Pękiel also introduces quotations from his own pieces and from contemporary Polish carols. More noticeable to most listeners, however, will be the careful, and deeply devotional, response to the words of the Mass: in Pękiel’s hands these lapidary texts come alive with an urgency that seems entirely new.

The only known connection between Kraków and the composer of our next item, Wacław z Szamotuł (b. Szamotuły, near Poznań, c. 1524; d. ?Pińczów, near Lielce, probably 1560), is that he was a student there (at the great and ancient institution that still exists as the Jagiellonian University). For much of his career Szamotuł worked as a court composer in Lithuania. Most of his music has unfortunately been lost, and even this beautiful setting of Acts, 12:11, *Nunc scio vere*, had to be reconstructed from an organ transcription. How much this is to be regretted can be gauged from his tender setting (followed by a more triumphant musical response to the ‘Gloria patri’) of the words which, in translation, read as follow: ‘Now I know truly, that the Lord has sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.’

## **Rutgers Collegium Musicum**

**Soprano:** Louise Deis, Carey Hackett, Jessica Chisholm, Cathy Whitener

**Alto:** Joseph Hill, Ginny Keil, Gloria Kiermiesky, Elizabeth Verderosa

**Tenor:** David Marsh, Paul McLean, Kevin O'Malia, Timothy J. Smith

**Bass:** Bill Buela, Brad Croushorn, David Keil, Dan Kenworthy

Rutgers Collegium Musicum, the Renaissance vocal ensemble of Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, is dedicated to the exploration of unjustly neglected repertory from the 'Golden Age' of polyphony. The ensemble, which currently comprises seventeen voices, was founded in its current form by its director, Professor Andrew Kirkman, and includes students, alumni and faculty members, as well as members of the local community. It presents varied and interesting concert programs of early choral and instrumental music, some of them in collaboration with the instrumental music faculty and students of the Mason Gross School, at venues in New Brunswick and in the tri-state area. Collegium is also available for sponsorships, concerts and private events.

For more information on Collegium Musicum, Professor Andrew Kirkman and Mason Gross School of the Arts, please access the following sites:

[masongross.rutgers.edu/index\\_flash.html](http://masongross.rutgers.edu/index_flash.html)  
[music.rutgers.edu/info/fac-bio/kirkman/](http://music.rutgers.edu/info/fac-bio/kirkman/)

To request information on being a sponsor, scheduling a concert, or for a CD sampler, please contact [gloriakiern@comcast.net](mailto:gloriakiern@comcast.net)

## **Andrew Kirkman**

Andrew Kirkman studied at the universities of Durham, London (King's College) and Princeton, and has worked at the universities of Manchester, Wales and Oxford. He is currently Associate Professor in music at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, New Jersey, where he is also director of the Collegium Musicum and the baroque/ classical orchestra *Musica Raritana*. His professional recording group, *The Binchois Consort*, has made seven recordings to date, all with Hyperion Records. Its recordings and performances, of music by Dufay, Binchois, Josquin, Busnoys and others, have received universally strong critical approbation and many music industry prizes. Kirkman's research centres on sacred music of the fifteenth century, and he has published and lectured widely on English and continental music of the period, including the music of such composers as Dufay, Ockeghem, Walter Frye and John Bedyngham. *Binchois Studies*, a collection of essays edited jointly with Dennis Slavin, was published by Oxford University Press.

**Producer and engineer: Bob Sellman**

world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

**Nunc scio vere** quia misit dominus angelum suum  
et eripuit me de manu Herodis  
et de omni expectatione plebis Iudaeorum.  
(Acts 12:11)

Now I know truly, that the Lord has sent his angel,  
and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod,  
and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

**Vox in Rama** audita est, ploratus et ululatus multus.  
Rachel plorans filios suos  
noluit consolari, quia non sunt.  
(Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:18)

A voice was heard in Rama of weeping and great lamentation.  
Rachel is weeping for her children,  
and will not be comforted because they are no more.

**Cibavit eos** de adipe frumenti  
et de petra mellis saturavit eos  
(Psalm 80:17)

He fed them with the fat of the wheat,  
and with honey from the rock he satisfied them.

**Ave Maria**, gratia plena  
Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus  
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus  
Sancta Maria, mater Dei,  
Ora pro nobis nobis peccatoribus  
Nunc et in hora in hora mortis nostrae  
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace  
The Lord is with thee  
Blessed art thou among women  
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.  
Holy Mary, mother of God  
Pray for us sinners  
Now and in the hour of our death  
Amen.

**In monte Oliveti** ad patrem oravit:  
Pater, si fieri potest transeat a me calix iste.  
Spiritus quidem promptus est caro autem infirma.  
Fiat voluntas tua; verumtamen non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu vis, fiat voluntas tua.  
(Matthew 26:39)

On the Mount of Olives he prayed:  
O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:  
the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.  
Do thy will, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Translations by David Marsh

The only composer represented on this disc who had no known connection with Kraków, Mikołaj Zieleński (*fl.* 1611) worked, as we know from the preface to the 1611 publication of all his known surviving music, for Wojciech Baranowski, Archbishop of Gniezno and primate of Poland. For most of the remainder of his life his whereabouts are unknown. As for other composers (the famous setting by Gaches de Wert, also part of the Collegium's repertoire, springs to mind), *Vox in Rama*, Rachel's famous lament on the death of her children (Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18) is a vehicle here for a profoundly emotional musical response. Zieleński seizes the opportunity for dramatic response, especially at 'ploratus et ululatus multus' ('weeping and great lamentation'), where he clothes the words in a chromatic descent that seems to embody the very sound of sobbing.

Like Szamotuła, apparently a student in Kraków, little is known of the life of the composer of the next piece on the recording, Marcin Leopolda (d. Lwów [now L'viv], 1589). This lovely setting of *Cibavit eos* (Psalm 80:17: 'He fed them with the fat of the wheat, and with honey from the rock he satisfied them') is one of only four motets surviving by Leopolda, all of them, like *Nunc scio vere*, known only from organ transcriptions and in this case restored to voices in a modern edition.

For the penultimate item we return to Pękiel, and his beautiful setting of the *Ave Maria*. Like so many responses to this ubiquitous

text, Pękiel's is characterized by an emotional buildup to a series of short musical utterances encasing each of the closing invocations. It is hard to imagine a more lovingly set series of statements than those that draw this motet to a close: to listen to the imploring setting of Christ's name at 'Jesu Christe' and the earnestness of the monophony at 'Ora pro nobis peccatoribus' ('Pray for us sinners') is to be left in no doubt as to the sincerity of the composer's response to this central touchstone of his faith.

The last item on this disc, Zieleński's setting, *In monte oliveti*, of Christ's prayer on the Mount of Olives, makes a powerful and virtuosic musical statement. Its wide leaps and vigorous, syncopated rhythms smack of a more extrovert 'baroque' idiom than that of the other, more placid works presented here. It thus offers some sense of the broader range, which we can only hint at here, of Polish polyphony of this period, and an invitation, we hope, for others to explore it further.

--Andrew Kirkman

## Texts and Translations

**Kyrie** eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

**Gloria** in excelsis Deo.

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te.  
Glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam  
tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnip-  
otens.  
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecation-  
em nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus.  
Tu solus Dominus.  
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest.  
And on earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise You. We bless You. We worship  
You. We glorify You.  
We give you thanks for your great glory.  
Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father al-  
mighty.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the father.  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.  
You who take away the sins of the world, have  
mercy on us.  
You who take away the sins of the world, re-  
ceive our prayer.  
You who sit at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For you alone are holy.  
You alone are Lord.

You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the Glory of God the  
Father. Amen

**Credo** in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et  
invisibilium.  
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium  
Dei unigenitum.  
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.  
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum  
de Deo vero.  
Genitum, not factum, consubstantialem Patri.  
Per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram  
salutem descendit de coelis.  
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria  
Virgine.  
Et homo factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato.  
Passus, et sepultus est.  
Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas.  
Et ascendit in coelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris.  
Et iterum venturus est com gloria judicare vi-  
vos et mortuos.  
Cujus regni non erit finis.  
Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivifi-  
cantem.  
Qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.  
Qui cum Patre, et Filio simul adoratur et con-  
glorificatur.  
Qui locutus est per Prophetas.  
Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam  
Ecclesiam.

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum.

Et vitam ventura saeculi. Amen.

I believe in one God, The Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things  
visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten  
Son of God.

Born of the Father before all ages.

God of God, Light of Light, true God of true  
God.

Begotten, not made, of one substance with the  
Father.

By whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came  
down from heaven.

And became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the  
Virgin Mary.

And was made man.

He was also crucified for us under Pontius Pi-  
late,

died and was buried.

And on the third day he rose again according to  
the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right  
hand of the Father.

And he will come again in glory to judge the  
living and the dead.

And His kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of  
life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Who together with the Father and the Son is  
adored and glorified,  
and who spoke through the prophets.  
And one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of  
sins  
and I await the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**Sanctus**, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy  
Lord God of Hosts.

Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the  
Lord.

Hosanna in the highest

**Agnus Dei**, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere  
nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, misere  
nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona no-  
bis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the  
world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the



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## Rutgers Collegium Musicum

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**Timothy J. Smith, Assistant Conductor**

**Bartłomiej Pękiel: *Missa Pulcherrima*:**

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Credo
4. Sanctus
5. Agnus Dei
6. Waclaw Z Szamotuł: *Nunc scio vere*
7. Mikołaj Zieleński: *Vox in Rama*
8. Marcin Leopolita: *Cibavit eos*
9. Pękiel: *Ave Maria*
10. Zieleński: *In Monte Oliveti*

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*Widely-known and much-loved in its native country, the music of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Poland remains unfamiliar elsewhere. Yet here is some of the most beautiful and eloquent music composed during the period, responding to familiar texts of the Catholic liturgy with great sensitivity and, at times, emotional intensity. There can be little doubt that the masters represented here deserve to be much better known outside their native land. With this disc, Rutgers Collegium Musicum aims to bring its glories to a wider audience, and, hopefully, to the attention of choirs searching for new and interesting repertory to engage and delight the concert-going public.*

